



the Edmondson Law Firm, PLLC

December 16, 2021

Via CMRRR #7018 0680 0001 1733 3006

EEOC Dallas District Office
207 S. Houston Street
3rd Floor
Dallas, TX 75202

Re: Rachel Childress Investigation of Gateway Church
Completed EEOC Charge 5 Form
Exhibit A: Summary of Claims & Background Facts
Request for "Notice of Right to Sue"

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find enclosed the completed EEOC Charge 5 Form, with attached Exhibit A, detailing the Summary of Claims & Background Facts, for our client, Rachel Childress. Ms. Childress wishes to obtain from the EEOC a "Notice of Right to Sue" against Gateway Church at the conclusion of the EEOC's investigation.

Please call me at 817-416-5291 with any questions you may have, or any additional information needed to expedite this process. I look forward to hearing from your representative and working with them on behalf of my client.

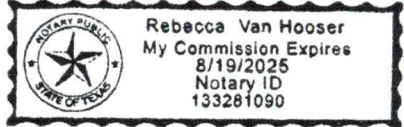
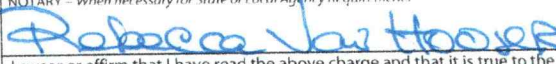
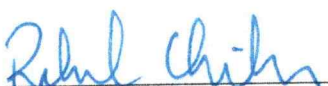
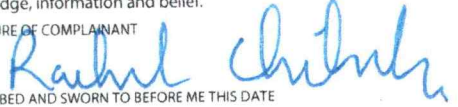
Sincerely,

Debra Edmondson
Attorney at Law

cc: Rachel Childress

Encl.

EEOC Form 5 (11/09)

CHARGE OF DISCRIMINATION This form is affected by the Privacy Act of 1974. See enclosed Privacy Act Statement and other information before completing this form.		Charge Presented To: _____ Agency(ies) Charge No(s): _____ <input type="checkbox"/> FEPA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EEOC	
Texas Workforce Commission Civil Rights Division _____ and EEOC			
Name (Indicate Mr., Ms., Mrs.)		Home Phone (Incl. Area Code)	Date of Birth
Ms. Rachel Childress		N/A	11/20/1982
Street Address _____ City, State and ZIP Code _____			
820 E. Dove Loop Rd., Apt. #1116, Grapevine, TX 76051			
Named is the Employer, Labor Organization, Employment Agency, Apprenticeship Committee, or State or Local Government Agency That I Believe Discriminated Against Me or Others. (If more than two are named, list under PARTICULARS below.)			
Name		No. Employees, Members	Phone No. (Incl. Area Code)
Gateway Church		1380	(817) 328-1000
Street Address _____ City, State and ZIP Code _____			
500 S Nolen Dr., Suite 300, Southlake, TX 76092			
Name		No. Employees, Members	Phone No. (Incl. Area Code)
Street Address _____ City, State and ZIP Code _____			
DISCRIMINATION BASED ON (Check appropriate box(es).)			DATE(S) DISCRIMINATION TOOK PLACE
<input type="checkbox"/> RACE <input type="checkbox"/> COLOR <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SEX <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION <input type="checkbox"/> NATIONAL ORIGIN <input type="checkbox"/> RETALIATION <input type="checkbox"/> AGE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISABILITY <input type="checkbox"/> GENETIC INFORMATION <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (Specify) _____			Earliest Latest 5/1/2018 9/7/2021 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONTINUING ACTION
THE PARTICULARS ARE (If additional paper is needed, attach extra sheet(s)):			
Please see the attached Exhibit A.			
			
I want this charge filed with both the EEOC and the State or local Agency, if any. I will advise the agencies if I change my address or phone number and I will cooperate fully with them in the processing of my charge in accordance with their procedures.		NOTARY - When necessary for State or Local Agency Requirements 	
I declare under penalty of perjury that the above is true and correct.		I swear or affirm that I have read the above charge and that it is true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.	
12.10.21  Date Charging Party Signature		SIGNATURE OF COMPLAINANT  SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO BEFORE ME THIS DATE (month, day, year) December 10, 2021	

EEOC Form 5 (11/09)

CHARGE OF DISCRIMINATION

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Charge Presented To:

Agency(ies) Charge No(s):

☐ FEPA☒ EEOC

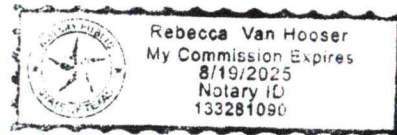
Texas Workforce Commission Civil Rights Division

and EEOC

State or local Agency, if any

THE PARTICULARS ARE (If additional paper is needed, attach extra sheet(s)):

Please see attached Exhibit A.



I want this charge filed with both the EEOC and the State or local Agency, if any. I will advise the agencies if I change my address or phone number and I will cooperate fully with them in the processing of my charge in accordance with their procedures.

NOTARY: When necessary for State or Local Agency Requirements

Rebecca Van Hooser

I declare under penalty of perjury that the above is true and correct.

I swear or affirm that I have read the above charge and that it is true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

SIGNATURE OF COMPLAINANT

Rachael Chisholm

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO BEFORE ME THIS DATE
(month, day, year)

12-10-21 *Rachael Chisholm*

Date Charging Party Signature

December 10, 2021

EXHIBIT A

Summary of Claims and Background Facts.

1. Ms. Childress has claims against Gateway Church for violations of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Texas Labor Code.

2. Ms. Childress is a female. Ms. Childress began her employment with Gateway Church in North Richland Hills (“NRH”) in April of 2018 as a part-time Administrative Assistant reporting to Al Pearson. Ms. Childress was paid \$15.00 per hour. In October 2018, Ms. Childress was hired full-time at Gateway Church by Kemtal Glasgow (then-Associate Pastor at NRH, but now promoted to Frisco Campus Pastor). Ms. Childress took a pay decrease to \$14.50 per hour; she challenged the decrease, but Human Resources (“HR”) told her it was because of health benefits.

3. Ms. Childress was terminated via Zoom video call by Stokes Collins (NRH Campus Pastor), Si Alford (Associate Director HR), and Jeanne Williams (Coordinator HR) on September 7, 2021. Ms. Childress was told by Stokes Collins during the call that “We have come to the place where we need to move on. We have reviewed the case, looked at it, and we have made the decision to part ways. God has plans for you, God has plans for the campus, but we are just at a space where we feel those plans are going in two different directions.”

4. Ms. Childress experienced a hostile work environment due to harassment and discrimination based on her sex/gender and health, and she faced retaliation due to her complaints of them. From nearly the beginning of her employment at Gateway Church (“Gateway”), Ms. Childress has been denied employment opportunities and promotions with Gateway due to her gender. She has also been subjected to repeated harassment from her supervisors. When Ms. Childress spoke up or complained about the harassment and disparate treatment, she faced retaliation and ultimately termination.

5. When Ms. Childress began working at Gateway in April of 2018, she had just gotten out of treatment for cancer and bone marrow treatment. She reported to Pastor Al Pearson (“Pearson”). From the beginning of her time at Gateway, Ms. Childress was subjected to disparaging comments about her appearances and unwanted advances from Pearson. Pearson told Ms. Childress that God gave her cancer to teach her a lesson (May 2018), he repeatedly asked Ms. Childress to take off her wig (as her hair was growing back from cancer treatments) (June – December 2018) and urged her to stop wearing a wig and just go bald (said in front of Crystal Ramon, Administrative Assistant during July 2018). He made comments about Ms. Childress’s appearance and how good she smelled and asked if she was dating any (December 2018). Pearson also bought Ms. Childress gifts (December 2018). Pearson also forced Ms. Childress to be alone with him in his office with the doors shut and blinds closed in attempts to discuss personal, non-work-related things. Pearson also changed Ms.

6. In June 2018, Pearson, during their weekly oversight meetings complained to Ms. Childress about his marriage and his wife when the two of them were alone at these meetings.

7. Ms. Childress reported Pearson's behavior in December 2018 to her manager, Kental Glasgow ("Glasgow") (Associate Campus Pastor NRH). Glasgow told Ms. Childress that she was not to be alone with Pearson.

8. In February 2019, Glasgow asked Ms. Childress to apply for an open "Care Pastor" position which would have meant a significant pay increase for Ms. Childress. Ms. Childress interviewed for the position with Stokes Collins (Campus Pastor), Wendell DePrang (Adult Ministries, NRH Campus Coordinator), Lorena Valle (Executive Pastor of Connect Ministries), Alicia Osgood (NRH Campus Coordinator) and Glasgow. During the course of the interview, Collins and DePrang informed Ms. Childress that while she was more than qualified for the position, they were looking to hire a man for the position because "our congregation responds better to men." Subsequent to the interview, Alph Samuels was chosen for the job.

9. During March 2019, Glasgow was promoted to a different position and Kyle Fox became Ms. Childress' manager. Stokes Collins asked Ms. Childress about the issues with Pearson and verbally apologized to her.

10. June 2019 – Ms. Childress is invited by Glasgow to interview for a pastor position at the Frisco TX location of Gateway. Ms. Childress was interviewed by Adana Wilson (Frisco Associate Campus Pastor) who informed her that while Ms. Childress was well qualified for the position, the Frisco team wanted to hire a male for the position. Subsequently Brad Stahl was hired.

11. August 2019 – Gateway added "OnBoarding" job role to Ms. Childress' job responsibilities. Ms. Childress believed that every other individual who was doing the "OnBoarding" work had the title of Associate Pastor. She asked Kyle Fox if she was going to receive a new title or more salary. Fox told Ms. Childress "no" and that it was an "honor" to take on more responsibility.

12. September 2019 - Even with the knowledge of Pearson's behavior, the decision was made by Kyle Fox to make Ms. Childress report to Pearson again. When Ms. Childress objected, she was presented with a written warning for being "insubordinate" by challenging the men in authority (October 2019).

13. December 2019 - Forced to work directly with Pearson, Ms. Childress was again subjected to multiple weekly meetings with Pearson (one on one) prying into her personal life, making inappropriate remarks, and attempting to physically touch her. Specifically in December 2019 Pearson made a physical advance on Ms. Childress and talked to her about "love languages" and how the two of them could do physical touch in his office and he could be her spiritual mentor. Ms. Childress rejected Pearson's advances and told him she was uncomfortable with him.

14. January 2020 – March 2020 – Ms. Childress is out on FMLA with a medical flare-up.

15. March 2020 – Ms. Childress returns and meets with Stokes Collins ("Collins") and tells him everything that has gone on with Pearson. Collins replies that he does not believe her. Collins further states that he is going to inform HR of Ms. Childress insubordinate attitude toward him (Collins) and that she is challenging his behavior and not submitting to his leadership.

16. April 2020 – Ms. Childress meets with Virginia Agada and Rebecca Wilson (both in HR) to tell them about the various incidents with Pearson. Nothing came of this meeting.

17. By March of 2021, Pearson's behavior still had not changed. Ms. Childress, again, reported to Kyle Fox (Pearson's manager) that she did not feel safe or comfortable working with or being around Pearson and requested to be moved somewhere else. Kyle Fox instructed Ms. Childress to write down her concerns and exactly what occurred and to continue working as normal.

18. March 2021 – Meeting with Pearson, another female ("Monique") and me. Pearson asks Monique to leave meeting which leaves Ms. Childress alone with Pearson. Pearson gives Ms. Childress a book on repentance and forgiveness that he says he bought for her.

19. April 2021, Ms. Childress again submitted her written concerns to Stokes Collins, Kyle Fox, and Virginia Agada, again asking to be moved because she did not feel safe or comfortable reporting to or working with Pearson. Ms. Childress is told that she is going to have to meet with Pearson face-to-face and read her concerns to him, but in the meantime, she will report to Kyle Fox. She is also told that HR does not facilitate moves within Gateway, and she will have to apply for a new position.

20. On April 20, 2021, the in-person "Reconciliation Meetings" began with Ms. Childress, Pearson, Kyle Fox, and Virginia Agada (from HR) present. Instead of reconciling the situation between Ms. Childress and Pearson during these meetings, Pearson got angry and aggressive, and afterwards Ms. Childress was subjected to retaliation by Gateway.

21. In May of 2021, Ms. Childress reported her hostile work environment to Virginia Agada (Associate Director of HR), Byron Copeland (Executive Campus Pastor), and Paulette Gillespie (HR Director). After meeting with Stokes Collins (NRH Campus Pastor), Virginia Agada, and Si Alford (Associate Director HR), Ms. Childress was threatened by Byron Copeland. He threatened to fire her if she didn't shut up and told her to stay quiet and stop stirring up drama.

22. On June 7, 2021, Stokes Collins, Si Alford, and Paulette Gillespie had a meeting with Ms. Childress to give her a "Probation & Employment Commitment" document. The complaints in the document focused on Ms. Childress' hostile workplace complaint to HR and pointed out Ms. Childress as the individual at fault rather than the supervisors who were harassing her.

23. The following day, Ms. Childress went on FMLA leave for 6 weeks due to a medical flare up. However, during that time, Paulette Gillespie attempted to get Ms. Childress to either resign and receive 3 months' pay or sign the Probation document. Ms. Childress notified Sara Bears (Director of Compliance HR) of this. On June 24, 2021, Ms. Childress received a written apology for how she had been treated by Gateway via email and FedEx delivery. Gateway also agreed to pay for counseling. Ms. Childress replied requesting a written apology from Pearson and to be moved when she returned from FMLA.

24. On July 19, 2021, Ms. Childress returned to work from FMLA leave; however, Kyle Fox placed her on administrative leave until the HR meeting scheduled for July 21. On July 21, 2021, Ms. Childress met with Stokes Collins, Kyle Fox, Virginia Agada, and Paulette Gillespie and was presented with her second "Probation & Employment Commitment" document. Ms. Childress

learned during the meeting that she would not be getting a written apology from Pearson because he was terminated. Ms. Childress was told that they were still negotiating Pearson's non-disclosure package; he received 2 years pay to sign the NDA.

25. On July 26th, 2021, Ms. Childress was in a car accident and suffered from a new serious medical incident. She received FMLA for 6 weeks, and she received FMLA Government Designation notice of protected job upon her return from leave. On July 29, 2021, Gateway started paying for counseling of harm done by Pearson.

26. On September 7, 2021, Ms. Childress was terminated during a Zoom meeting with Stokes Collins, Si Alford, and Jeanne Williams (HR Coordinator where she was presented with a Separation Agreement that offered 6 months' pay and benefits paid through April 2022.

27. Gateway Church and its employees intentionally treated Ms. Childress in a manner that caused a hostile work environment for Ms. Childress. Additionally, the circumstances surrounding Gateway Church's termination of Ms. Childress are discriminatory and qualify as disparate treatment of Ms. Childress by Gateway Church. As such Gateway Church's actions violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Texas Labor Code.